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# Farm Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250-1340 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2621

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**AG INCOME FORUM** -- An open forum on farm income and agricultural policy will be held August 2 at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. Leaders of major farm groups, agribusiness and Congress join with Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy to discuss issues of agricultural trade and development policy, export programs, farm income and farm policy. The forum seeks insights to the challenges confronting domestic and international agricultural policies, and the changes needed in programs to have them better serve American agriculture. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

**COORDINATING FEDERAL AGENCIES** -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy is the long-term midwest flood relief coordinator. Appointed to the position by President Clinton, Espy is coordinating the response by all federal agencies to victims of flooding and excessive rains. Espy has toured the flooded region several times and has met with farm and community leaders to discuss rebuilding efforts. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

**WHEAT PRODUCTION** -- Total U.S. wheat production in 1993 is forecast at 2.6 billion bushels, up six percent from last year and the fourth largest crop on record. Average yield is forecast at 40.5 bushels per acre, topping 40 bushels for the first time. Spring wheat yields, including Durum, are predicted to average 39.3 bushels per acre, second only to last year's record 41.5 bushels. Winter wheat yields are forecast up sharply from 1992. Wheat supplies are expected to be seven percent larger than last year. U.S. wheat exports are projected down 11 percent to 1.2 billion bushels. Large competitor supplies and slack global demand are lowering export prices. The lower prices for wheat and higher prices for feed grain are expected to boost U.S. feed use and disappearance by 67 percent in 1993/94. **Contact: Ed Allen (202) 219-0840.**

**AG TRADE** -- The positive trade balance for U.S. agriculture is projected to grow even larger by the end of the decade. Despite current stagnation in U.S. exports, the outlook is for economic growth to increase abroad. Trade liberalization is expected to continue generating export opportunities. The U.S. has maintained an agricultural trade surplus of \$18 billion over the last five years. Bulk products such as grains and soybeans have accounted for the largest portion of the trade surplus. But since 1986 high value products are contributing more than bulk products to the \$13 billion leap in the ag trade surplus. **Contact: Cathy Greene (202) 219-0313.**

**AG COMMODITIES DONATED** -- The United States is donating \$13 million worth of U.S. agricultural commodities for use in Russia. A private U.S. voluntary organization will distribute the commodities in Russia to pensioners, invalids, single mothers, young children, discharged veterans, and the homeless. The donation includes vegetable oil, whole dry milk, rice, lentils, butteroil and infant formula. The U.S. will donate \$24 million worth of U.S. dairy products for use in Armenia. **Contact: Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448.**

**PRODUCTION CONCENTRATION** -- Half of the total agricultural sales in the U.S. is produced by only 3.6 percent of all farms. That is down from 17 percent of all farms in 1900. Average sales in real dollars per farm increased 4,858 percent over the period, while average farm acres increased 756 percent. Despite these increases, the farm sector remains much less concentrated than other sectors of the economy. For example, in manufacturing only 0.1 percent of all manufacturing firms account for 43 percent of total value shipments. Technology has played the major role in fostering farm concentration, and is expected to continue as a force into the next century. **Contact: Neal Peterson (202) 219-0522.**

**FRUIT CONSUMPTION** -- Total U.S. fruit consumption last year was 264 pounds per person. This includes the quantity of whole fruit used to make processed fruit products such as orange juice. Total citrus consumption was just under 100 pounds per capita, with oranges accounting for 77 pounds, and grapefruit 12 pounds. But only 13 pounds of oranges were consumed fresh, and only 6 pounds of grapefruit was consumed fresh. Total apple consumption was 48 pounds per capita, but only 19 pounds of apples were consumed fresh per person. **Contact: Dennis Shields (202) 219-0884.**

**MONITORING STORED GRAIN** -- USDA researchers are using acoustic sensors, small microphones, to detect insects deep inside grain bins. A study is monitoring stored wheat at farms near Manhattan, Kansas. The 140 sensors are strung vertically on cables inside the bins and connected to a computer that monitors insect sounds. The study will determine how many sensors are necessary to accurately monitor the grain. The system informs farmers about the severity of infestation, and when to use the right amount of fumigants for control. **Contact: David Hagstrum (913) 776-2718.**

**FEE CHANGE** -- Many importing countries of U.S. agricultural products require federal phytosanitary certificates which indicate that plants or plant products are free of pests and diseases. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is primarily responsible for inspecting plant exports and issuing federal phytosanitary certificates, but states issue almost half of all the federal certificates. Exporters often bring their shipments to state agricultural offices to be inspected. After August 16 states may use a cost-per-hour charge for certification instead of the currently allowed cost-per-certificate. The change allows states to recover their costs. Phytosanitary certificates issued by APHIS will continue on a cost-per-certificate basis. **Contact: Doug Hendrix (301) 436-7253.**

**ORGANIC FOOD REGS UPDATE** -- The National Organic Standards Board is developing recommendations for standards to be incorporated into regulations for organic food. The board advises Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy on production and processing standards, imports, and an accreditation program. Among the unresolved issues are labeling policy for products with less than 95 percent certified organic ingredients, livestock medications, and a list of prohibited natural inputs and allowed synthetic materials in production and processing. **Contact: Robert Dismukes (202) 219-0313.**

**FLOOD ASSISTANCE VIDEO** -- A 22-minute video, "The Flood of '93 - USDA Responds," is available. It explains the assistance offered by USDA to victims of recent heavy rains and flooding in the Midwest. Available in 3/4" U-matic or 1/2" VHS. The information is also available on an audio cassette. Media only please. **Contact: Vic Powell (202) 720-4330.**



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #1886** -- Brenda Curtis reports on the advantages of a free trade agreement for North America. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1368** -- Out of harm's way; mosquito control fads and follies; xeriscaping; coupons, are the worth the trouble?; amino acid spells trouble. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1878** -- USDA News Highlights; farmers for NAFTA; disaster assistance update; U.S. broilers flying overseas; the greenhouse. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1631** -- "Value-added" exports; new uses for commodities; screening for resistance; infrared sensing; desert survival still. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Tuesday, August 10, crop & weather update; Wednesday, August 11, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Thursday, August 12, world ag grain situation, world cotton situation, world oilseed situation; Friday, August 13, livestock & poultry update; Monday, August 16, milk production; Tuesday, August 17, crop & weather update, cranberries, farm labor. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.**  
*Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.*

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- Pat O'Leary reports on a USDA video that shows how to keep farm waste out of streams; Lynn Wyvill reports on beta carotene and good health; Tyson Gair of Mississippi State University reports on Farmers Home Administration youth loans.

**ACTUALITIES** -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and U.S. Trade Ambassador Mickey Kantor on NAFTA; USDA chief meteorologist Norton Strommen with a weekly weather and crop update; USDA official Bonnie Poli on pesticide record keeping.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- Lynn Wyvill reports on Forest Service wood products research; DeBoria Janifer reports on the watermelon feast season; Pat O'Leary on declining farm numbers.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*

## OFFMIKE

**A TORNADO**...dropped one tower and damaged two others, says **Rich Hawkins** (KRVN, Lexington, NE), leaving the station with one transmission tower. Another storm came through ripping the roof off the transmitter building and damaging the 50kw transmitter. Rich says the engineering staff performed miracles by getting a 10kw unit operating under a temporary roof to feed the one tower. Only a total of 20-hours airtime was lost. It will be a long rebuilding process to get the building and antenna farm back to normal. Rich says the high winds snapped a lot of corn, and muddy conditions are making it difficult to harvest wheat.

**GROUND BREAKING CEREMONIES**...have been held for a new studio and office building, says **Kim Dlouhy** (WOW, Omaha, NE). They'll move from the central section of the city to the north central portion. Its too wet to begin construction, but with a little dry weather they hope to have it completed by February of next year. Kim says agricultural land in the southeast section of the state is mostly underwater, but other areas will produce a crop.

### *Farm Broadcasters Letter*



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Radio-TV Division  
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**12 HOURS ON & 12 OFF**...was the typical work day for the staff, says **Bob Quinn** (WHO, Des Moines, IA). The news and farm department took over programming of the station for nearly a week during the flood. Bob says that with some rationing and emergency supplies there was adequate drinking water. However, the 12-day breakdown in the pipeline distribution system cut off normal use of water, such as washing clothes and flushing toilets. Bob and **Lee Kline** also reported live about flooded rural towns and drowned crops. One of the biggest problems confronting farmers is that there can be no measure of loss until harvest. Costs are escalating. Many producers have been unable to grow grain or hay, and are buying feed.

**HIGH TEMPERATURES**...are causing problems for poultry producers, says **Johnny Hood** (Southern Farm Network, Raleigh, NC). Thousands of birds have been killed by the heat. The spraying system used by many producers to cool the birds doesn't work in high humidity and high temperatures. Johnny notes that the loss is not covered by crop insurance.

VIC POWELL

Chief, Radio & TV Division